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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/24/01 9:54pm
Subject: Microsoft settlements

For over one and a half decades I have watched Microsoft grow their power and dominance in the computer industry. They have not grown because they had the best products, but because they were masters at marketing, and once they got large enough to buy out or intimidate almost any competition they have had an extremely deleterious impact on the market.

They had a monopoly of the operating platform for PCs , as proven in the antitrust case, and then with their muscle moved into other fields quickly eliminating the competition that once dominated the given field. Two examples are Netscape in the browser field, and Novell in the network area. When the government slapped their hands in their attempt to buy Intuit so they could extend their domination into the financial field they just set about the same process and have also made considerable headway there. Now they are trying to beat out Palm with their more limited Windows interface and are going head to head with Nintendo and Sony in the games area. It is quite apparent that their goal is to dominate the whole computer realm.

If they always made the best product and refined it to eliminate most of the problems and everyone flocked to their products for that reason I would object less, but they don't. People use many of their products because they come free on their computer, or because they come as a package with a program that they really want, like Excel, and since they have it they might as well use it rather than buy a competing product. I must admit that Bill has gotten so smooth in his marketing that he can claim that he "knows what the customer wants" and they will buy it. When ever there is a new version out he is so convincing that "everyone wants it" that they have to have it to or they will get lost in the dust.

A couple of years ago I had a coworker with a Masters degree tell me that they went with a Windows machine because that was what "everyone had". Furthermore since they bought MS Windows they decided to get a Microsoft mouse and keyboard to. The fact that they did not choose it because it met a need, or was the most effective way to get their work done, etc. but because everyone had one shows the power of MS's advertizing campaign.

I am not pleased with the settlement direction that has been taken once Microsoft had been proven to be a monopoly that had misused and abused its position of power. I am not sure that they need to be broken up into two or more companies, although I don't see that as a bad thing, but from what I have read the alternative that you have taken does nothing concrete to insure they will not continue to do business as

usual. In fact even the potential settlement of the other major suit, involving the state of California and others against Microsoft, will be an enhancement of their market by forcing the schools into using their software and the hardware that runs it. Instead they should be given the money and be allowed to purchase the hardware and software they want to use.

Please reconsider the consequences and insure that something significant comes out of this landmark case. Something that will help the consumer like me by opening up the competitiveness of the computer industry.